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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am a hiker and very interested in wild flowers. I am concerned that a road through the Pumice Plains of Mt St. Helens National Monument will drastically change my experience of this unique eco-environment.

Currently I travel to Johnson Ridge. After appreciating the view over the Pumice Plains to the mouth of the volcano from the always teeming visitor center, I walk toward Harry's Ridge looking out over the Plains, a magnificent, if apocalyptic view. Truman's trail twists it's way through that valley replacing it with a gravel road replete with trucks, kicking up dust, would change the picture completely and for the worse. Isn't there some less intrusive way to get materials to the Spirit Lake Tunnel? Will Windy Ridge lose its wild beauty and a walk i share with thousands every season be changed to a construction site?

One of the joys of this park is another walk, the 11 or so miles from Johnson Ridge through the Keyhole to Cold water Lake. Each time I have done it I have noticed new plants described to me as the natural progression of recovery from the volcanic eruption some 30years ago. I just enjoy it, this year's patch of tiny lupin, the uniquely beautiful paintbrush, bitterroot etc. Will construction vehicles and equipment bring in weeds like Stinky Bob, teasel, scotch broom and star thistle?

And what about the recovering resident population of mountain goats. Will the road construction harm them? Or any other of the fish or wild life in the Spirit Lake area. Had a full Environmental Impact Study addressed this risk.

Is there some way to repair the Spirit Lake Tunnel without building a permanent road in full view of Johnston Ridge and bringing in road building equipment. Could, for instance, helicopters and boats be used?

Thank you for your consideration.